

# of Diabetes

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Being subjected to the influence of  
those laws and customs relative to gra-  
duation in this institution, which require  
that every candidate for a diploma should  
write a dissertation previous to his exami-  
nation, I have with considerable diffidence  
undertaken one, which nothing but my pec-  
uliar situation could have induced me to  
do at this time. For purposes of little or no  
experience of my own, I am constrained to  
follow the footsteps of others, which are often  
times incorrect and for the most part ques-  
tionable. Many situations all claim to ori-  
ginality must necessarily be relinquished  
and so far from aiming at it, I have not  
hesitated occasionally, when I have found  
it sufficiently clear and familiar for  
my purpose, to use the language of others.

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It was my intention to have written an experimental essay, but want of time and the difficulty of procuring proper subjects obliged me to abandon the idea and choose some practical subject. I have accordingly selected Diabetes, a disease which in common with many others has been subjected to much theory and speculation and like others remains involved in considerable obscurity.

This disease, which Buller places in the class neuroses, order spasmodic, and which has been systematically, but by some supposed inadequately divided or distinguished into Diabète mellitus wherein the urine is sweet and fragrant, and Diabète insipidus with leprous urine not sweet, is marked by great thirst, a voracious appetite, accompanied with an apparent defect in the power of excretion, weeping and a disinclination to exertion, emaciation of the

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whole body, great debility, dry skin, a parched mouth, with constant spitting of a thick viscid phlegm of a sweatish taste, covering the palate commonly frequent, an offensive foaming, for the most part present, and a frequent voiding of urine, containing a quantity of saccharine matter; which last is the most spontaneous character of the disease; the urine discharged generally far exceeding the quantity of fluid as sometimes almost introduced, being very clear and at first sight appears watery without any colour, but seems in a certain light, it generally appears to be slightly tinged with a yellowish green; and in this respect it has been very properly compared to a solution of honey in a large proportion of water.

As this disease often arises to a considerable degree, and subsists long without being accompanied with violent disorder in any particular part of the system, the

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increased discharge of urine being generally attributed by the patient to the quantity of drink he has taken; there is soon difficulty in ascertaining the first and earliest symptoms of the disease, or that state of it, at which the sweating and incoction of the urine takes place; for the saccharine taste of the urine is frequent, though only discovered by accident. Dr. Rolle thinks there is scarcely a doubt but that an affection of the stomach exists previous to the formation of saccharine matter and mentions cases where the canker appetite preceded several months the increase of the urine, he thinks however, the history of the previous circumstances, and of the immediate commencement, still requires further elucidation.

No age or constitution seems to be exempted from this disease, it occurs in all classes of people, though probably more generally in the higher and middle

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orders, and those whose constitutions have been states  
tered by intemperance. Males are said to be more  
liable to it than females; although probably this  
may not be the case, for its apparently more fre-  
quent occurrence in males, may I suppose rather  
be attributed to the extreme delicacy of the  
female sex concealing their sensations when under  
the influence of the disease, than to any peculiarity  
of their constitutions exempting them from it. It is pos-  
sible that an hereditary predisposition may exist as to the con-  
plaints, for cases are recorded where several members of the  
same family have been affected with it. The progrss  
of the disease appears to be much influenced by the  
various passions of the mind, such as grief, rage,  
fear, &c. as they always aggravate the symptoms.

When Diabetes has been of long continuance,  
although the patient may be apparently cured  
yet frequently it leaves behind local affec-

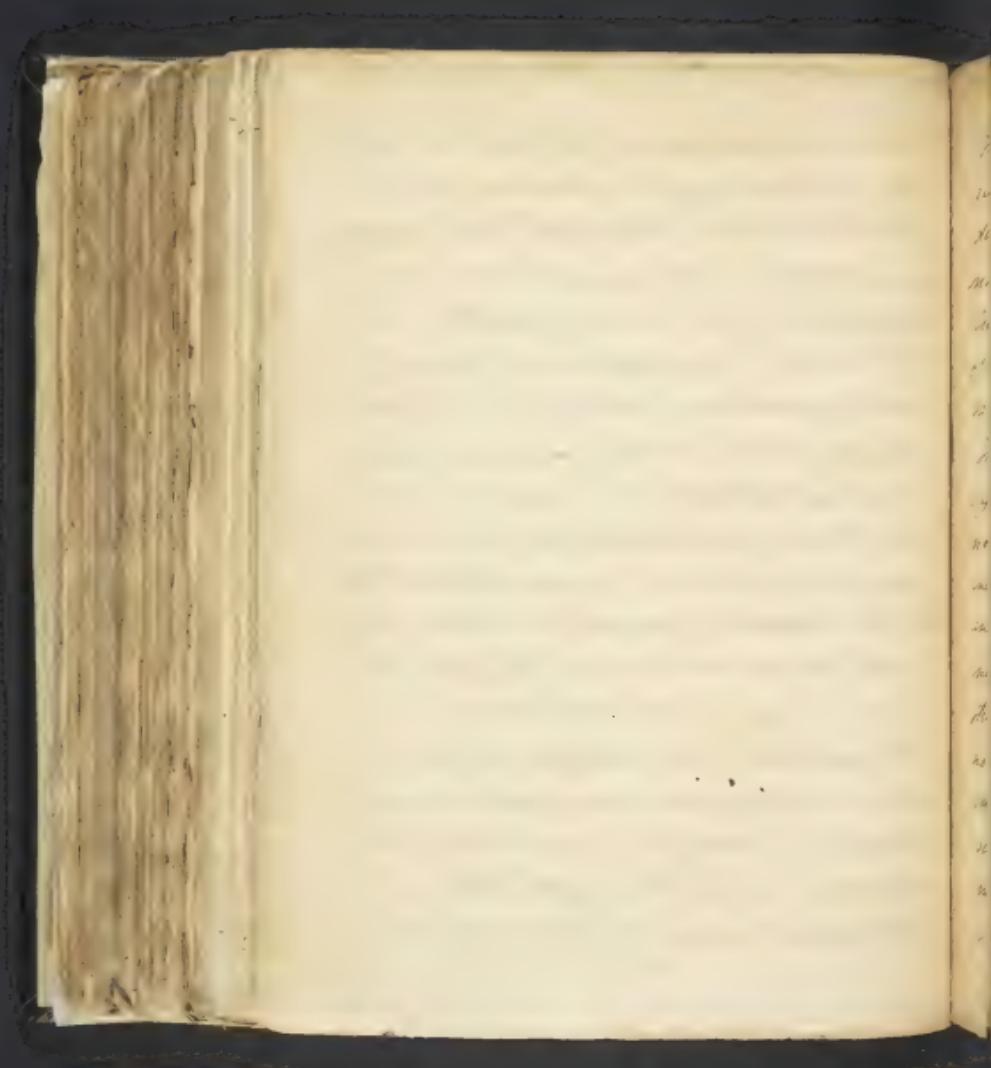


Gone. Digestions have shown morbid operations of the mesenteric glands and kidneys, and the structure of the stomach, pancreas, spleen, and lungs is sometimes altered.

It appears to be now pretty generally conceded that Diabetes insin. contains a considerable quantity of saccharum-matter, which appears to be exactly of the same nature as common sugar.

M'Coll thinks that he has met with one case where the urine was perfectly insipid, he seems to consider such instances very rare, and believes that the other is almost the universal occurrence. M'Coll discovered the saccharum of the urine - physicians have all since or before observed it.

The immediate cause of Diabetes mellitus has always been considered obscure, and various theories have been advanced on the occasion. I shall only observe a few of them, and then proceed. I may mention the one which appears to me most plausible.



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The initial condition, in which the kidneys are sometimes found at deposition, has placed the majority of physicians to consider Diabetes as depending on a primary affection of those organs, and that it is in consequence principally of their impaired or deranged action, that the secondary symptoms in the disease are produced.

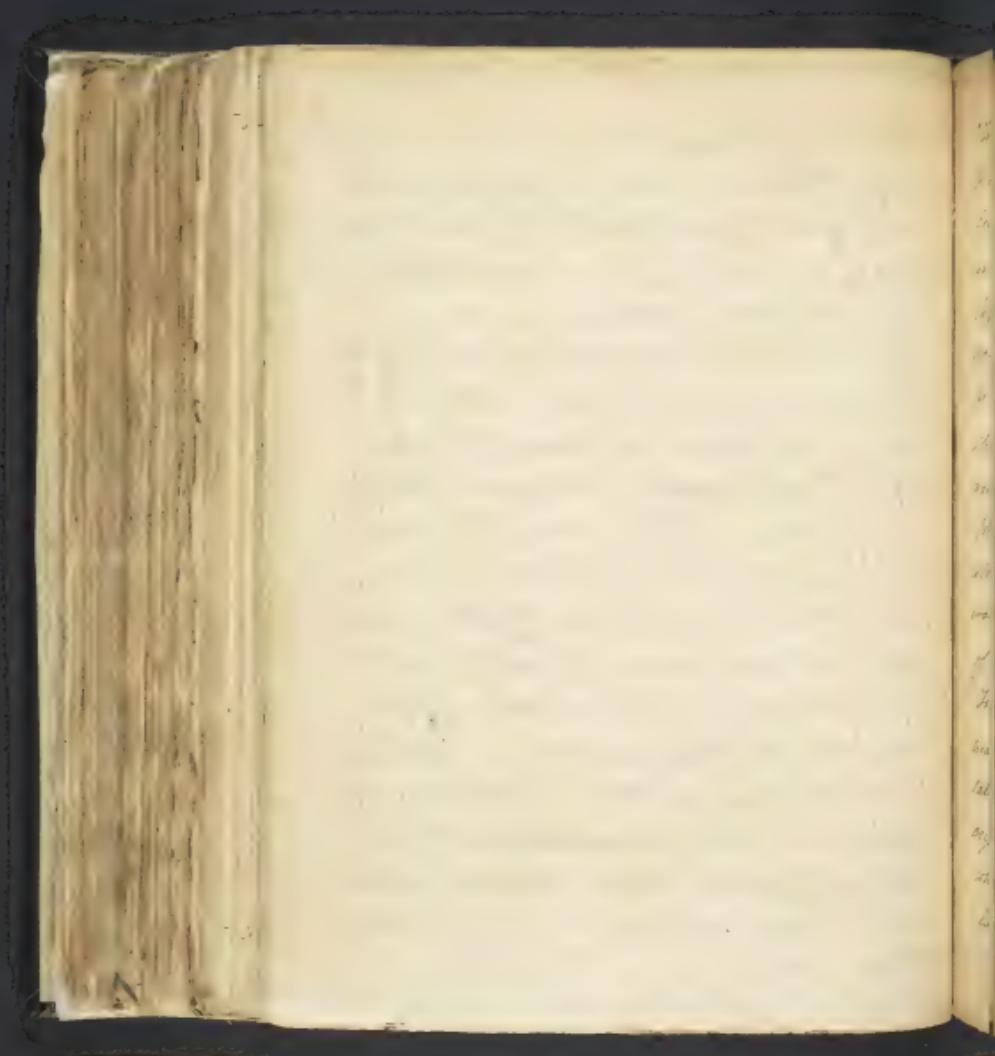
This <sup>material</sup> action of pressure may be secondary, and as far as the law of the animal economy permits, sympathetic to it; in that action is increased according to the exigencies of the body, and being kept up for a considerable length of time, must necessarily produce more or less disease by the continued stimulus it imparts. They have no agency I believe in the production of the sugar incident to Diabetes, nor, but merely serve to accide it already formed in the system, and to throw it out of the system. Those who favour the idea of the primary <sup>consequent</sup> exist-

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in the kidneys, have endeavoured to show the possibility of the sugar being formed by a secretion similar to that which takes place in the breasts of women, which secrete a large amount of saccharine principles with milk.

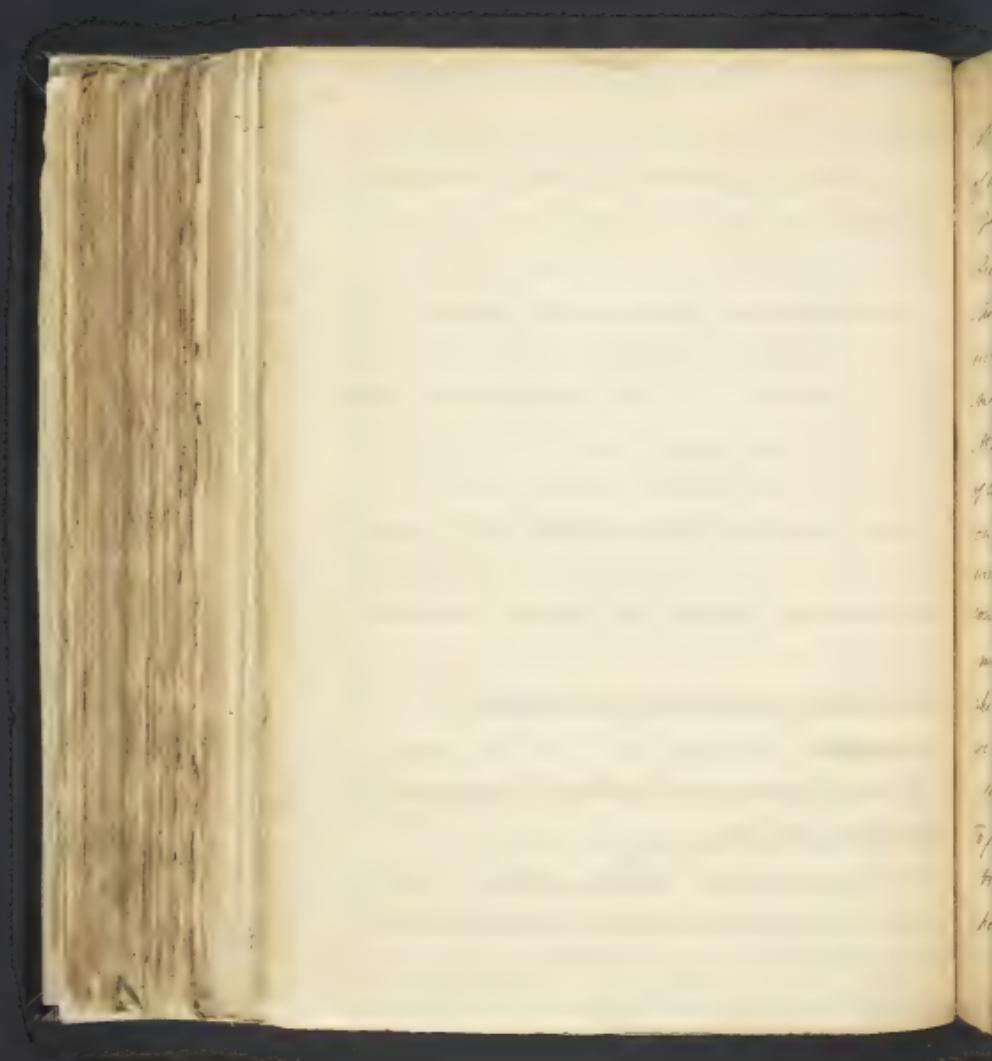
The facility and celerity with which fluids containing different principles, are conveyed to the kidneys; whilst the quality of the excretion discharged is so different, has occasion now more regard than organs as receptacles, rather than secreting; and consequently they consider the urine not a product but an educt of the blood. Admitting however this similarity between the action of the in anima and kidneys, at least so far that each secrete a saccharine principle, yet it has been demonstrated by chemical investigation, that there is an essential difference between the sugar of milk and the saccharine matter in Diabetic urine.



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Two drams of the sugar of milk were digested by  
Lactic acid. with 3 drams of water; red, like  
sugar with 3 drams of water. This was very often re-cooked,  
and left to cool; which being done, a small  
light yellowish mass mixed with a white  
powder. The precipitate weighed about 10  
grains. Two drams of lactic acid were added  
to 3 drams of tartaric acid and digested;  
and the white powder remained unchanged.  
This was separated by filtration, and weighed  
about 10 grains; and it, further experiment,  
was found to keep all the junction properties  
of saccharated acid.

Two drams of the extract of diabetic urine were  
heated at the same time in a similar manner  
till it became hot; no white powder appeared. The  
crystals weighed about 10 grains, and were  
easily dissolved in boiling water. No sacche-  
ratic acid was produced in this experiment.

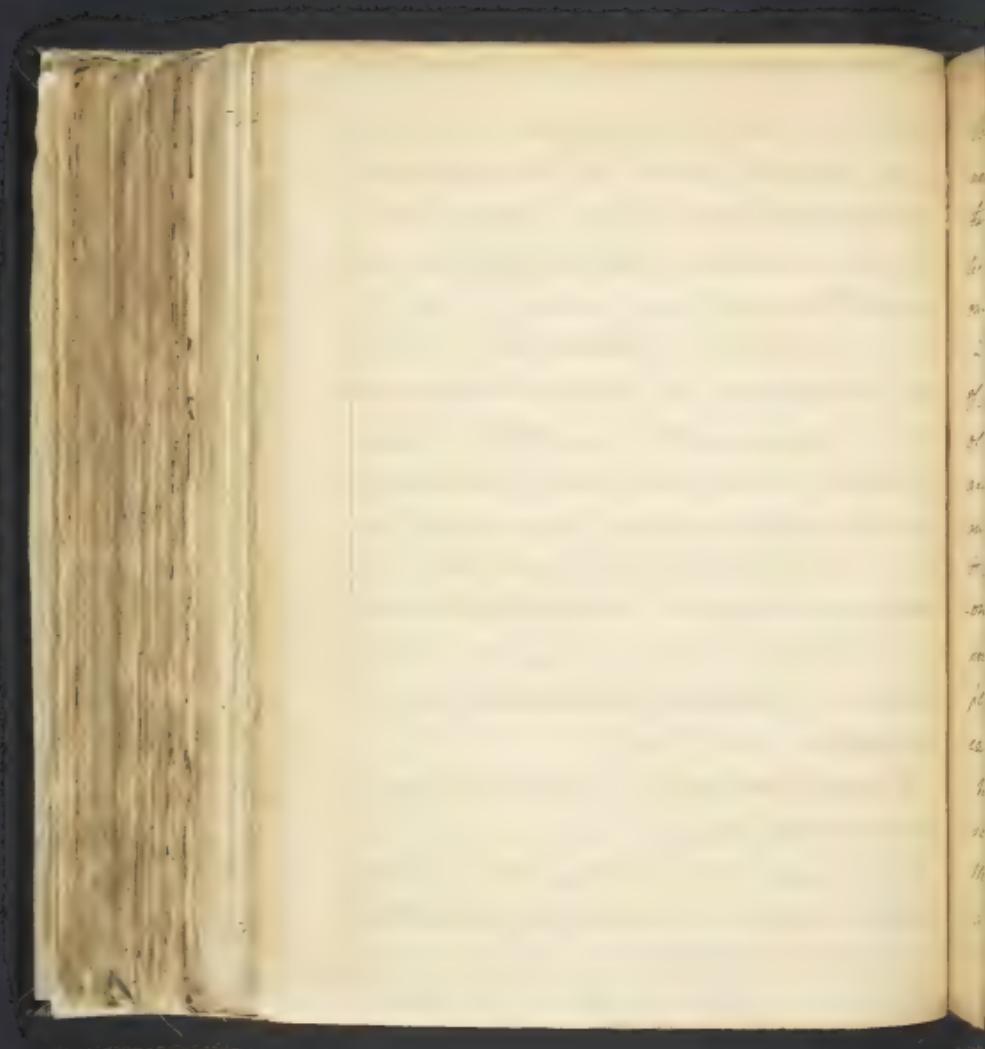


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which was repeated several times on the extract  
of wine from different <sup>12</sup> Berberis plants.  
It would seem from these experiments of Mr.  
Frederickson, that the epithelial difference in  
time the secret active matter of Diabetes  
comes, and sugar of milk, especially in those  
who do not contain the sugar of saccharin, and  
it would also appear from him that the sugar  
of milk, was produced by a process of animalization  
whereas the saccharine principle of Berberis  
wine should be separated in a vegetable extract  
combined with a greater or less proportion of ani-  
mal mucus; resembling very much honey,  
which is not a product of animalization, but of  
vegetables.

A certain state of the body has been supposed  
to produce this disease.

It is probable that it has sometimes occurred in  
persons who were at the same time affected with



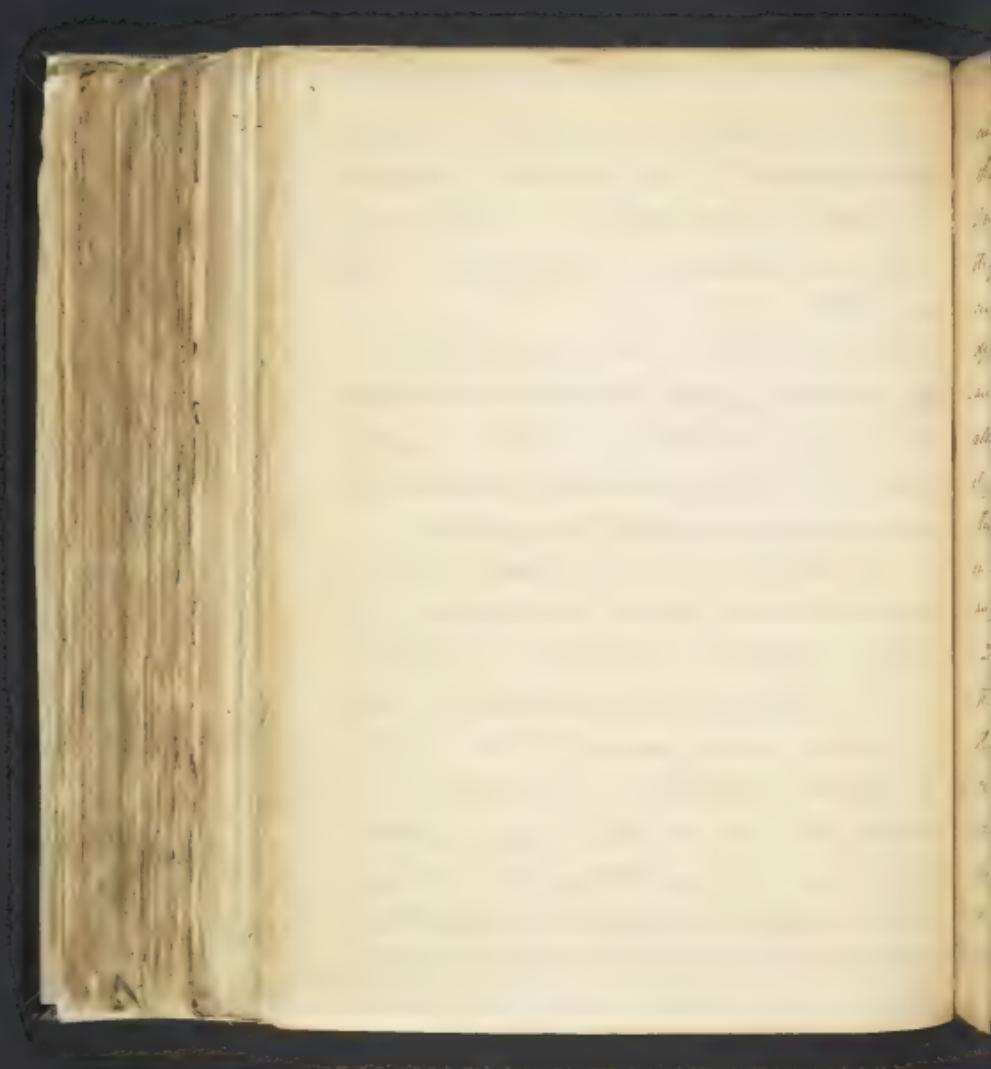
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disease of the liver. But I apprehend that this can  
not frequently, if the case, for Dr Cullen observes  
that in taking this disease, which he has seen of Diabetes,  
there was no evident affection of the liver in any  
one of them.

To Richter, professor of medicine in the university  
of Goettingen, supposes Diabetes to be commonly  
of a spasmodic nature, occasioned by a stimulus  
acting on the kidneys; then an increased excretion,  
and sometimes purgative is the consequence.

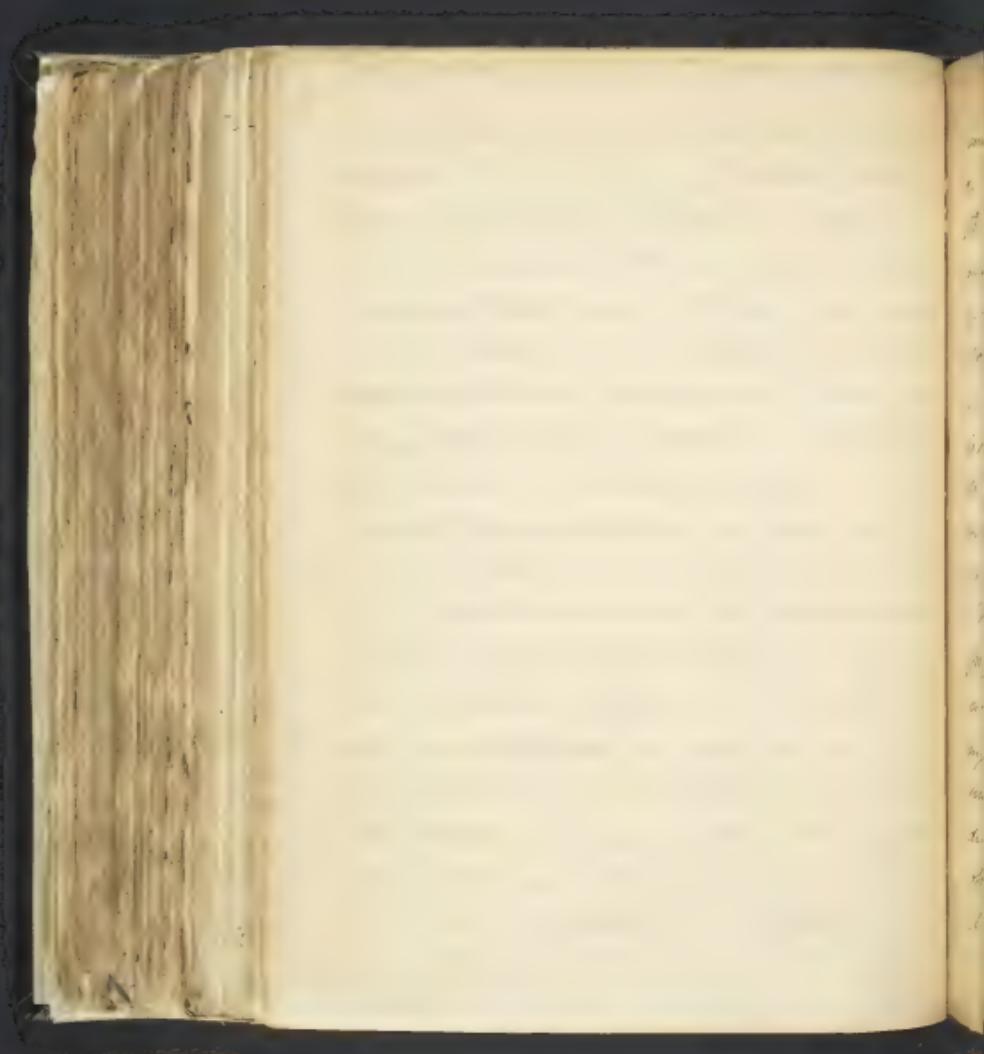
It is true that irritation may sometimes occur  
on an increase in the discharge of urine, but  
now it effects the singular change which takes  
place in its composition, I imagine can not  
easily be accounted for.

No Hypothesis yet advanced seems to prove in a  
satisfactory manner the primary seat of  
this disease; but from the weight of evidence  
and an attention consideration of all the cir-



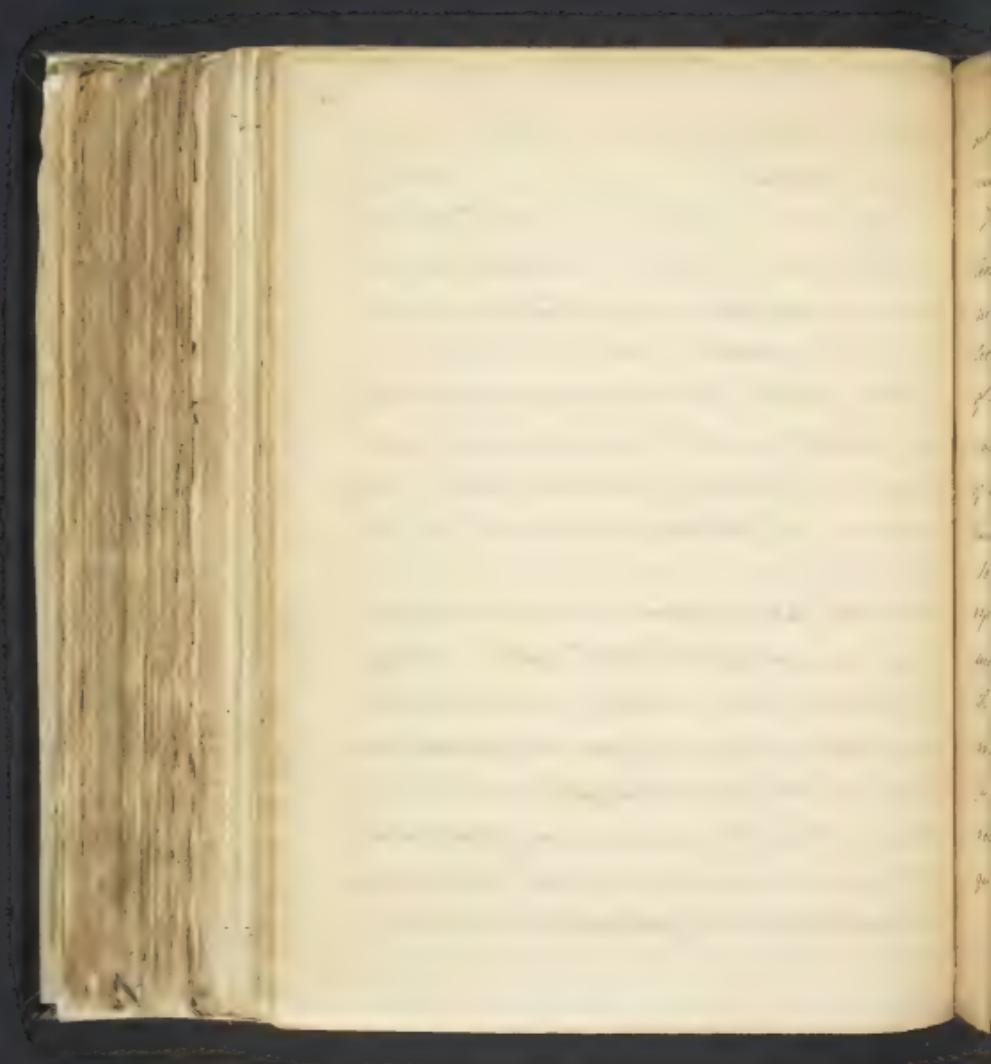
circumstances attending it. I am induced to believe  
that it is altogether a disease of the stomach.  
I am led to this opinion, in the first place from  
its often attending other diseases of that visc-  
cus, such as hysteria, hypochondriasis and  
dyspepsia; in the second from the various  
losses of appetite, of digestion and convalescence  
almost invariably attendant on the third from  
its general occurrence in those whose conve-  
tions have been shattered by intemperance  
in drinking or other excess; the effects of which,  
are principally exerted on the stomach.

To bear in his lecture on Diabetes, read before  
the Royal Medical Society, wherein he appears to side  
the correctness of mine, and supports his opin-  
ion with the most convincing arguments, we  
see that the stomach was by no means ex-  
cluded of the disease; in the saccharum  
water which is excreted in molasses, from which the



substances taken in. Diabetic Mellitus he went  
to 1500cc. approach'd to owing to an attack of  
the disease, markedly increased; by which a large  
quantity of diabetic liquor was excreted, which also  
by its malic nature, seemed capable of decom-  
posing the vegetable matter, and therefore of  
practicing the saccharine principle and dead  
to the disease, in which, vegetables do not appear  
to convey to the changes that take place in health,  
and remain possibly changed into the saccha-  
rine principle.

In health, an uniform and perfect character is  
injurious, and applied to the diabetic, perju-  
re of the animal economy. In its composition,  
sugar appears to be an essential article, but it  
undergoes the proper changes; where in this  
disease it remains unchanged, producing  
other morbid affections, besides those on which  
its undecomposition depends and is thrown.



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out by Dr. Reddy's, as an eatimous and very  
con. M. 2000. etc.

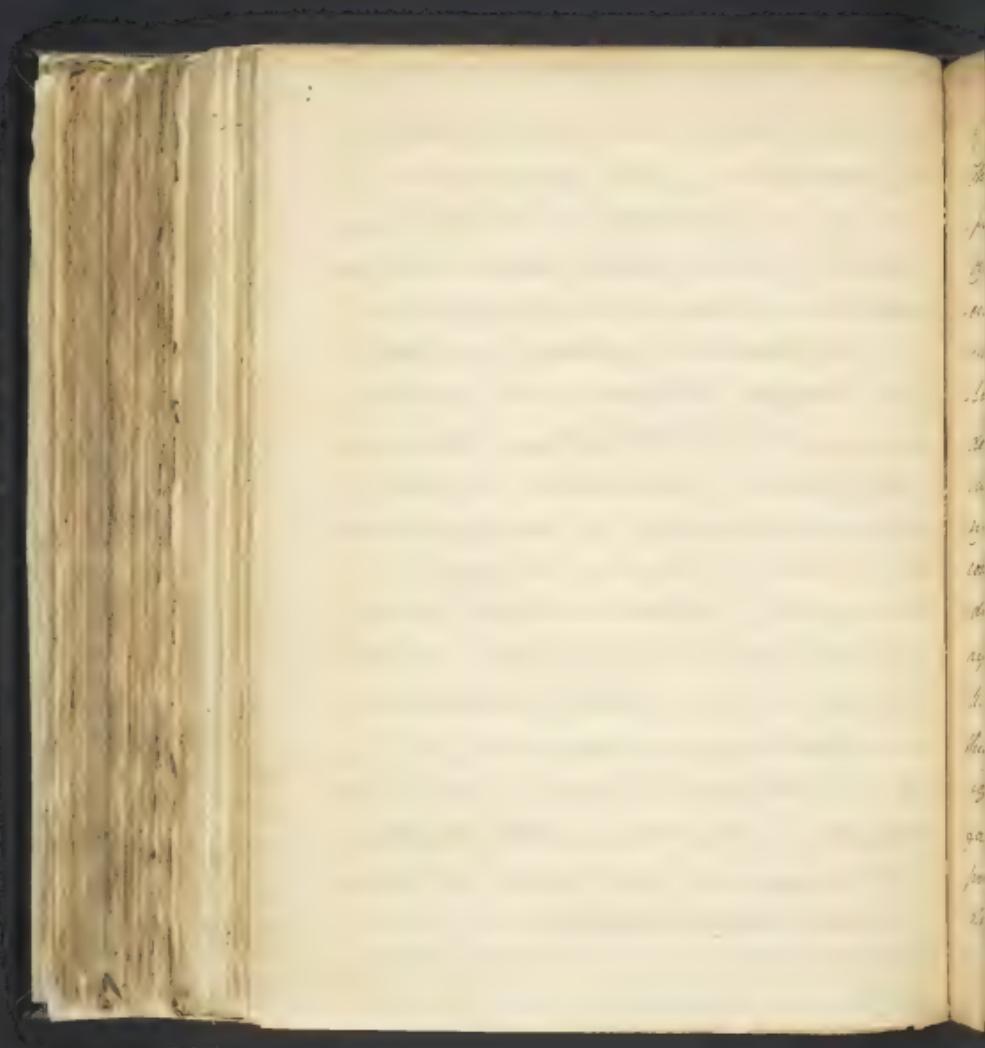
The alteration, and increase, in the secre-  
tion of the gastric fluid, appears to be the  
necessary consequence of the morbid ac-  
tion of the stomach. The great quantity  
of viscid matter ejected by vomiting in this di-  
ease, together, with the nature and rapidity  
of digestion, support the opinion of such an  
evasion in the gastric fluid.

To the formation of saccharine matter, is the  
explanation of the increase in the quantity of  
urine principally referable; although from  
the rational connection between the stomach  
and kidneys, we may suppose that indepen-  
dence of the saccharine matter, so long as the morbid  
action of the stomach remains, a proportionate  
quantity of urine will continue to be discharged.  
In addition to the arguments derived from

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The disease itself, we have the observations of  
many practitioners of the highest eminence  
which very satisfactorily prove, that the blood  
of Diabetic patients contains sugar in its com-  
position - we learn from the experiments  
of Dr Dobson that he detected sugar in the  
blood of persons labouring under Diabetes  
in a case of Diabetes which fell under the obser-  
vation of the late physician Boston, his patient  
discharged daily large quantities of excre-  
tive matter in his urine. On riding him  
the and tasting the serum of the blood, the  
presence of sugar was distinctly exhibited.  
The experiment was repeated several times  
and with the same result.

From the facts above related, I imagine I am  
warranted in the conclusion that the stomach  
is the primary seat of the disease, dependent  
upon some change in its natural powers

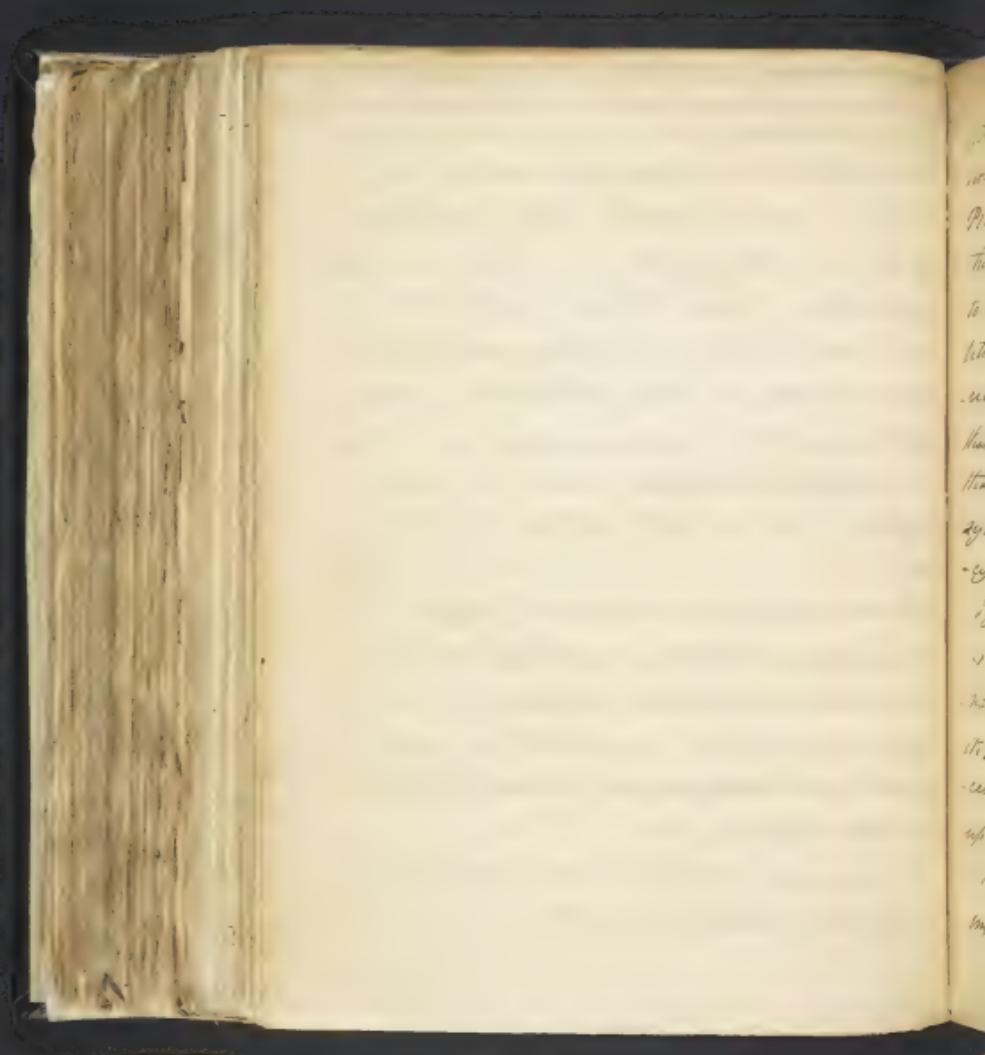


The food is hereby rendered unfit for the processes of nutrition, and when taken up by the lacteals, and conveyed to the general circulation, it is rejected by the excretive powers of the system, and eliminated through the kidneys. The morbid or deranged action of those organs is generated in the effects of nature. In the vascular system of that of the body which is constantly passing into it through the medium of the lacteals. I have here again repeat that the diseased appearance of the kidneys is entirely owing to sympathetic; by its action is increased according to the exigencies of the system; and being continued a very length of time, will necessarily produce more or less disease by the continued stimulus which it imparts.

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It is the opinion of Mr Ballantyne and some others that the saccharine principle of Dextrin is soon formed in the stomach, is conveyed immediately from thence to the nervous system without entering the general circulation. The above gentlemen wished to test this opinion from not being able to detect sugar in Diabetic blood. To confirm which in connection with Mr Scott, performed a number of experiments on the Pug. But, the question was whether it could be detected in the blood or the excretions, when taken internally. After examining several times with the assistance of Mr M'Leod, they concluded that it did not absorb or take up into the general circulation, but carried by some unknown vessels from the stomach to the kidneys.

To my surprise I am still as doubtful as ever to form a definite idea. I am however



written. The stomach and kidneys. It is remarkable how soon that Mr. Weston's not detecting the Pug & Polys in the blood proceeded rather from the imperfect state of his mind. His knowledge, than to its actual absence. The specific differences between Marsh mites and common *Blattæ* we have, however, yet been discovered; yet all agree that their properties are essentially different, and that we only know them by their effect on the system, ignorant of the nature of their agency.

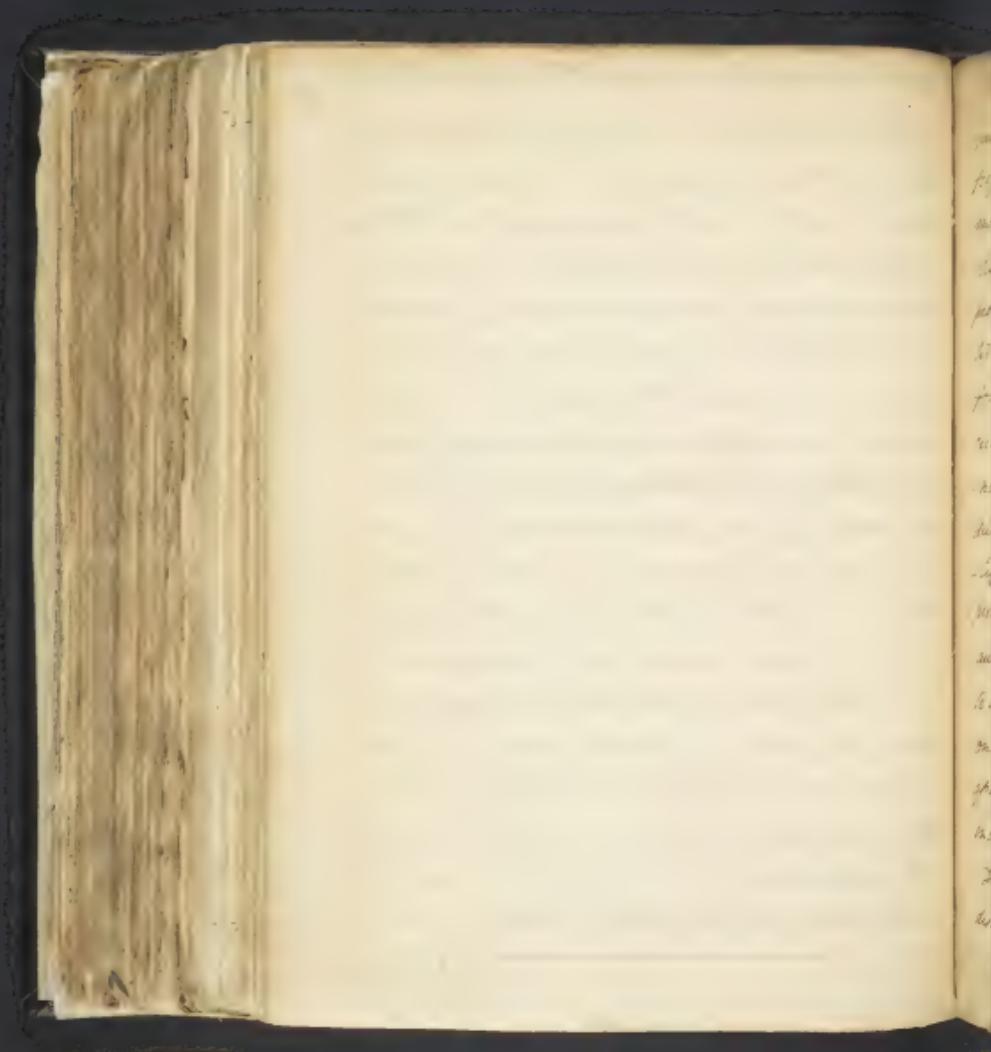
By no means wish I to be understood, from hence, or my opinion, that substances enter indiscriminately into the circulation unchanged, as you do. It is, I believe, a general rule, that all substances are assimilated previous to their being taken up by the lacteals.

The cure of Diabetes Mellitus is as yet but imperfectly understood. This appears to be

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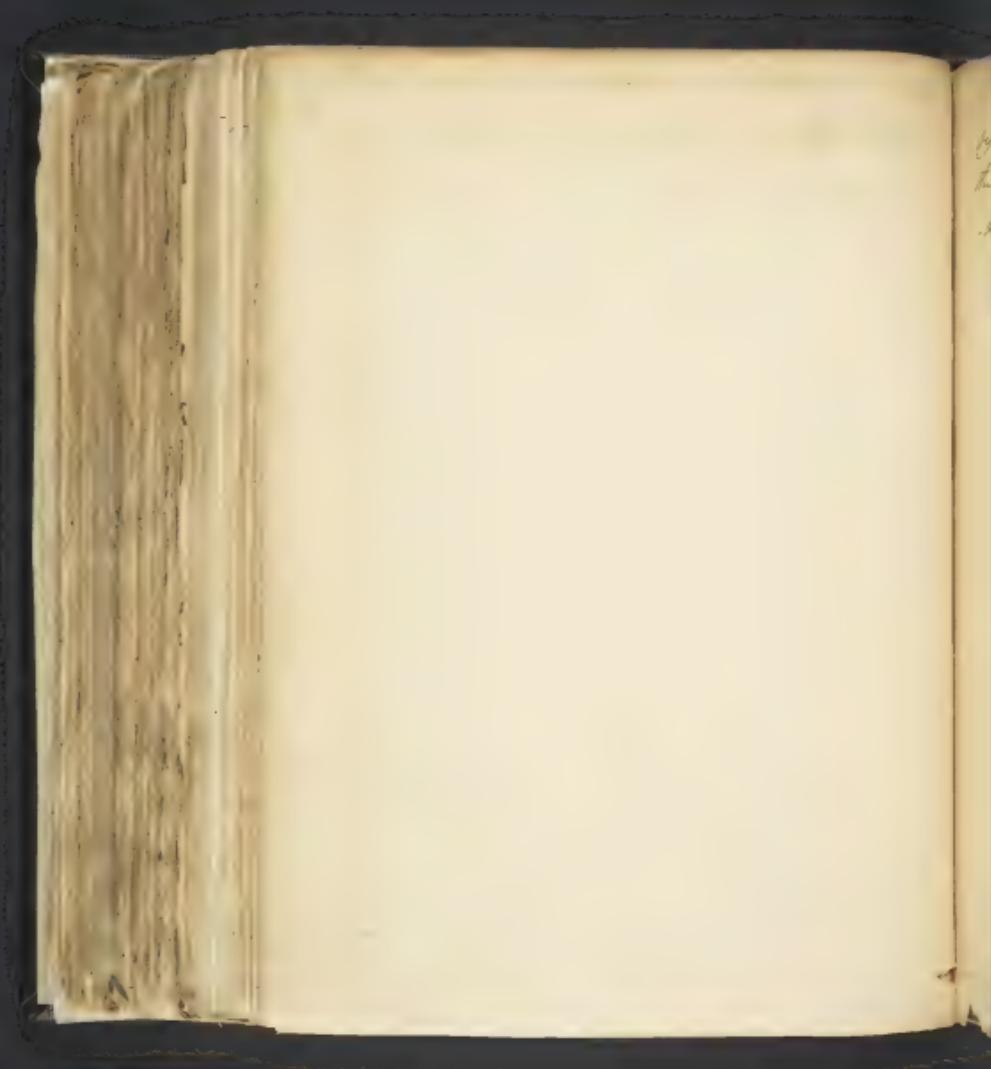
a chronicized man insensibly. Dr. Allen doubts whether it has ever been cured, or if cured, whether it can be avoided by the remedies taken. The treatment has been as various as the theories respecting the disease itself. Two remedies according to Dr. late Dr. Barton have acquired more reputation than others in Febrile. Mr. Massey related a case which Dr. Weston cured by the use of Sal. Acetici. Dr. Barton supposed that gall might be substituted with advantage for alum. he had heard of one case cured by the use of sicc. r. & H. Miller considered rhubarb as a tonic in this disease. Massey advised the use of cap. Phaeoceras. For an emollient  
of a combination of Senna, Aloe, Castor and opium. Stitics about the region of the kidney are said to be sometimes serviceable. Dr. Barton thought that he had used the Phosphate of soda as a purgative with advantage.

Is the mode of treatment which have hitherto been

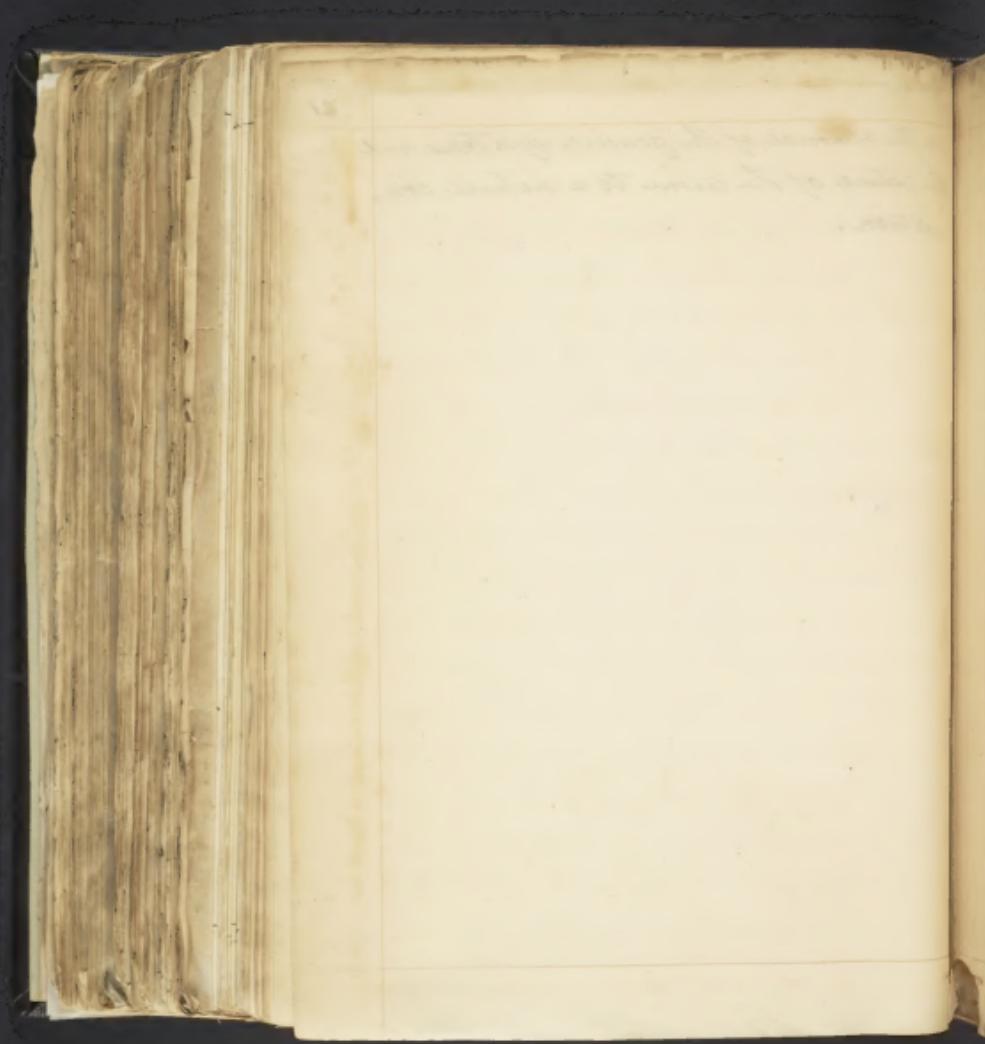


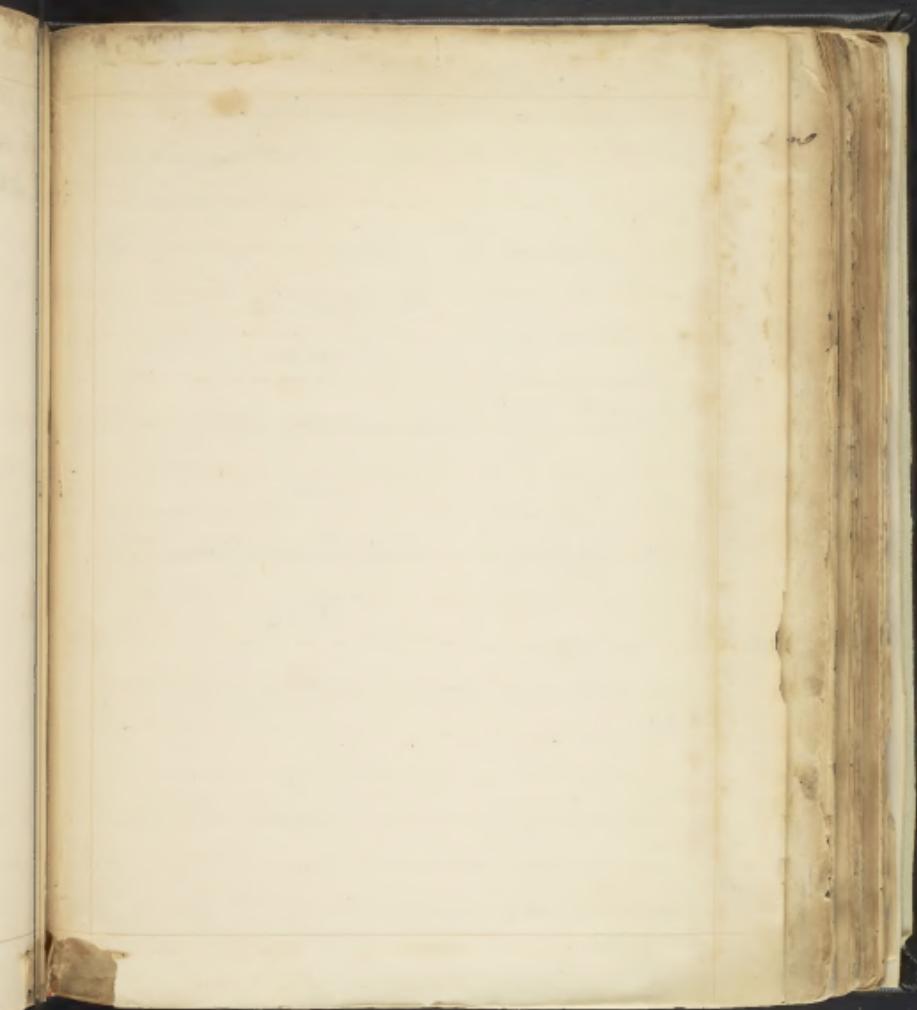
now and repeating this diet can appear to have been  
peculiarly unproductive. I shall briefly make  
mention of the plan recommended by Dr. Bell,  
which according to the view I have given of the  
peculiar cause of Diabetes appears to be best adapt-  
ed to it, one which is said to have frequently pro-  
duced cures under the most unfavorable  
circumstances. Before inventing an entire abstin-  
ence from wine, species of vegetable matter, a  
diet wholly of animal food, with emetics, hypos-  
-tigia, ammonia and narcotics, constituting the  
principal plan of his treatment; which seems to  
answer the two indications which he supposes  
to be 1. to digest the saccharin mass up going  
on in the stomach. 2. & to promote a heating  
operation, by the removal of the morbid  
increased action of that organ.

This method should be pursued on until the  
disease be entirely removed; which is generally



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by the removal of the general symptoms, and  
the return of the mind to a natural con-  
dition.





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